

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 AID-05

OC-06 CCO-00 DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 SSM-03 SCCT-01

ACDA-07 USSS-00 IO-13 SAM-01 SAB-01 OMB-01 EB-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6219

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 14: SYRIAN/CHRISTIAN MILITARY
PRESSURES CONTINUE AS LITTLE HOPE SEEN FROM ARAB LEAGUE
MEETING

REF: BEIRUT 6178

1. SUMMARY: SYRIAN/CHRISTIAN PRESSURE ON TRIPOLI GROWING.
SYRIAN FORCES ENTER BAALBEK ON GROUND. SYRIAN PRESSURE
CONTINUES ON SIDON DESPITE WITHDRAWAL PROMISES. TELL ZAATAR
BATTLE DRAGS ON DESPITE LARGE NUMBERS OF PALESTINIAN
PRISONERS; PROMINENT PHALANGIST KILLED, AND WEST BEIRUT
HOSPITALS PREPARE FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF PALESTINIAN WOUNDED.
ARAB LEAGUE EIGHT-POINT PROGRAM GREETED WITH CYNICISM IN
BEIRUT, BUT SOME HOPE INSPIRED BY POSSIBILITIES OF SYRIAN-
PALESTINIAN SUMMIT MEETING. NEW "NATIONAL UNION FRONT"
BEGINS EXPANDING CONTACTS. FOOD PRICES IN WEST BEIRUT
RISING RAPIDLY; GASOLINE NOW ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND.
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REPORTS OF SYRIAN TROOP BUILDUP IN LEBANON CONTINUE.

SMALL BRITISH/AMERICAN CONVOY DEPARTED BEIRUT JULY 14.
END SUMMARY.

2. PRESS CLAIMSVIOLENT COMBAT CONTINUES IN NORTH
LEBANESE WHERE TRIPOLI COMING UNDER PRESSURE ON THREE
SIDES BY COMBINED RIGHTIST/SYRIAN PINCERMOVEMENT.
SYRIANS AND CHRISTIANS MAY NOT ATTACK CITY, BUT
ESTABLISS BLOCKADE IN MANNER OF BEIRUT AND SIDON.
RIGHTISTS SAY THEY HAVE TAKEN KALAMOUN. TRIPOLI
CONTINUES SUSTAIN INTENSIVE BOMBARDMENT FROM ZGHORTA
AND FROM NEW RIGHTIST POSITIONSS AT DEIR BALAMAND AND
DAHR EL-AIN, SITE OF TRIPOLI WATER SOURCE. LEFTIST/
PALESTINIANS SAY THEY HAVE BOMBARDED OUTSKIRTS OR
TRIPOLI TO IMPEDE RIGHTIST DRIVE.

3. BAALBEK REMAINS SITE OF INTENSE DIRECT SYRIAN
ACTIVITY, DESPITE CONTINUED SYRIAN DENIAL OF INVOLVEMENT
IN FIGHTING IN LEBANON. PRESS REPORTS VIOLENT STREET
FIGHTING AND HEAVY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES JULY 13 AS SYRIAN
TROOPS ENTERED LONG-BLOCKADED CITY. SYRIANS MAY HAVE
BEEN ABLE IMPOSE TERMS FAVORABLE TO THEMSELVES IN
AGREEMENT WITH PALESTINIANS/LEFTISTS. EXTENT OF
SYRIAN CONTROL OF CITY NOT KNOWN. WE HESITATE REPORT
FALL OF BAALBEK IS IMMINENT IN LIGHT OF ENDURING
IMMINENCY OF FALL OF TELL ZAATAR.

4. AFTER REPEATED PROMISES FROM BOTH DAMASCCS AND
LOCAL SYRIAN COMMANDERS AT SIDON, A RELIABLE SOURCE
FROM SOUTH LEBANON REPORTS THAT SYRIANS AREFINALLY
PULLING BACK TOWARDS JEZZINE MORNING JULY 14, BUT
PALESTINIANS SKEPTICAL, AFTER EVEN ARAFAT HIMSELF JULY
13 WAS PREMATURELY CONFIDENT OF WITHDRAWAL. SOME SYRIAN PRESENCE
REMAINS ON HILLS OVERLOOKING SIDON IN OBVIOUS BLOCKADE
AGAINST ARMS SUPPLY TO PALESTINIAN/LEFTISTS. LIBYAN
DESIRE RESUPPLY PALESTNIANS IS PERHAPS OVERRIDING
REASON FOR JALLOUD'S CONTINUED EFFORTS EFFECT SYRIAN
WITHDRAWAL, ESPECIALLY FROM SIDON. PALESTINIAN/
LEFTIST SOURCES REPORT OVERFLIGHTS OF AREA BY SYRIAN
AIRCRAFT AND PERIODIC BOMBARDMENT OF SIDON AND NEARBY
PALESTINIAP/LEFTIST POSITIONS.
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5. TELL ZAATTAR REMAINS ACTIVIE WITH LEFTISTS CLAIMING
TO HAVE REPULSED 53RD ATTACK.. SOME DEFENDERS,
ATTEMPTING SURRENDER, HAVE BEEN SHOT BY THEIR COMRADES.
KATAEB MILITARY CHIEF WILLIAM HAOUI KILLED JULY 13 AS
HE ADVANCED TO TAKE SURRENDER OF ONE GROUP, AFTER HAVING
RECEIVED REPORRTED 450 PRISONERS IN PRECEDING 24 HOURS.
SCALE OF PALESTINIAN LOSSES AT TELL ZAATAR MAY BE

REFLECTED IN REQUEST BY PLO TO AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL TO BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE 300 WOUNDED, WITH ADDITIONAL 1200 WOUNDED TO BE PLACED IN OTHER WEST BEIRUT HOSPITALS. NABAA, DEKOUANEH, SIN EL-FIL, MANSOURIEH, AND OTHER SURROUNDING AREAS SCENES OF HEAVY ARTILLERY DUELS. CHIAH/AIN EL-RUOMANEH AND HADETH/LAYLAKE FRONTS AGAIN VERY HOT. BEIRUT'S MOST ACTIVE AREA IN PAST 24 HOURS WAS PORT, WHERE INFILTRATION ATTEMPTS REPELLED. PORT FIRE CONTINUES TO BURN. IN MOUNTAINS, SNIPERS ESPECIALLY ACTIVE AT SMFAR. ALEY/KAHALE EXPERIENCES BOMMARDMENTS AND GROUND ACTION. ARTILLERY DUESS CONTINUE ALONG LINE OF FARAYA/SANNINE/AINTOURA/MTEYN/BCHELAMA/MROUJE/BOIS DE BOULOGNE/ZAAROUR. POST OF JOUNIEH WAS CLOSED JULY 13, LEFTISTS SAY BECAUSE CHRISTIAN SIDE GETTING NEW ARMS SHIPMENTS.

6. LARAB LEAGUE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM CIARO THAT SYRIAN/PALESTINIAN SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN THREE DAYS RENEWS STRAW/CLUTCHING OPTIMISM IN LEBANESE POLITICAL CIRCLES. AS-SAFIR AND OTHER PAPPER HOWEVER JUDGE THAT AL EIGHT-POINT PROGRAM INDICATES THAT AL SO FAR HAS SUCCEEDED ONLY IN CRYSTALLIZING DISPUTES AND IS APPROACHING PROBLEM AS IF IT WERE ONLY A SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN QUARREL. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR HEADLINES HOPES FOR A BASICALLY LEBANESEPOLITICAL SOLUTION, BASING OPTIMISM ON THREE FACTORS: 1) RENEWED CONTACT BETWEEN BELLIGERENT PARTIES; 2) RUMORS OF UPCOMING JUNBLATT/PIERRE GEMAYEL MEETING UNDER AEGIS OFCHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS; AND 3) POSSIBLE RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN KATAEB AND FATAH BASED ON SECRET MEETING SAID HELD JULY 12 BETWEEN ARAFAT AND A TOP LEVEL PHALANGIST.

7. NEWBORN NATIONAL UNION FRON TI S ONE SOURCE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM IN BEIRUT. FRON T MET JULY 13 WITH RAYMOND EDDE, SAEB SALAM, RACHID KARAME, TAKIEDDINE SOLH, RACHID SOLH, AMINE HAFEZ AND OTHERS PRESENT, TO DISCUSS CONTACTS WITH ALL PARTIES ON BASIS WORKING PAPER REITERATING FRONT'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF ANTI-PARTITION, SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL AND APPLICATION OF CAIRO ACCORDS. GROUP, DUE TO MEET AGAIN JULY 14, SAID ESPECIALLY EAGER OPEN DALOGUE WITH NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND KFOUR FRONT. FORMER PREMIER TAKIEDDINE SOLH SAYS CONTACTS UNDERWAY TO UNITE NATIONAL UNION FRONT WITH LIKEWISE NEWLY FORMED ISLAMIC ASSEMBLY. PIERRE GEMAYEL ASKS MUFTI OF THE REPUBLIC AND MARONITE PATRIARCH TO CALL "SPIRITUAL SUMMIT" TO PUT LEBANESE IN CHARGE OF THEIR OWN DESTINY. WE TEND TO CAST A SYMPATHETIC BUT JAUNDICED EYE ON THESE CYCLICAL SPATES OF POLITICAL

ACTIVITY.

8. LIVING CONDITIONS IN WEST BEIRUT CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE WITH FRESH FOOD DAILY SCARCER AND MORE EXPENSIVE. CITY ALSO LACKING STAPLES SUCH AS FLOUR, SUGAR AND RICE. TRAFFIC PARACTICALLY AT STANDSTILL DUE GASOLINE CUTOFF FROM STILL-BURNING ZAHRANI REFINERY. TELEX COMMUNICATION REESTABLISHED TOCERTAIN LOCATIONS JULY 13 BUT PROMISES OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER REMAIN LARGELY UNFULFILLED. KAMAL JUNBLATT SAID JULY 13 NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE BEING CREATED IN WEST BEIRUT ALONG LINES OF SEPARATE MUNICIPAL STRUCTURE ALREADY OPERATIVE IN EAST BEIRUT.

9. REPORTS OF NEW SYRIAN TROOP ENTRIES INTO LEBANON CONTINUE. LEFTIST SOURCES CLAIM 1000 SYRIAN TROOPS ENTERED LEBANON AT MASNAA JULY 13. WE HAVE REPORTS OF AN ADDITIONAL SYRIAN TANK COMPANY AT JEZZINE.

10. JOINT BRITISH/AMERICAN CAR CONVOY LEFT BEIRUT JULY 14 FOR DAMASCUS. CONVOY INCLUDED SEVEN BRITISH EMBOFFS AND FIVE PERSONNEL FROM US EMBASSY. SEELYE

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